

280 EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND  
EEFOBMER

for that of the public at large. More passages, — there were twenty-five, some, no doubt, rather long ones, incriminated in a volume of hundreds of pages — proved nothing. One might find scores and scores of passages in the Bible which if taken without the context and the general knowledge one has of the book might make it appear undesirable.

In the case of "The Soil," the facts should have been expounded, whether they influenced the jury or not. But Vizetelly's counsel, Mr. "Williams, was evidently quite disheartened; he deemed it useless to prolong the case; and so after the briefest of consultations the plea of "not guilty" was withdrawn for one of "guilty." It was a complete collapse.

• Mr. Williams, however, began to address the Eecorder in mitigation of punishment, and in doing so referred to Zola as "a great French writer." "Oh, no, a voluminous French writer, if you like," said Sir Edward Clarke. "A popular French writer," the Eecorder suggested. "A writer who certainly stands high among the literary men of France," Mr. Williams retorted; whereupon Sir Edward Clarke exclaimed in a pompous way, "Do not malign the literature of France I" Whether the Solicitor-general was

qualified to express any opinion of weight  
on the literature  
of France might well have been doubted  
by all who had  
heard him pronounce the name " Jean."  
But Mr. Williams  
got in a last word. Confirming his  
description of Zola,  
he said: "It is apparent to all who have  
studied the  
literature of France at the present day."<sup>i</sup>  
And he might  
have added that Zola had but lately been  
made a knight

<sup>i</sup> "The Queen v<sup>r</sup> Henry Vizetelly." Transcript from the  
shorthand notes  
of Messrs. Barnett and Buckler, of Bolls Chambers, Chancery  
Lane.